

## GIFT-GIVING IN DUBROVNIK'S FIRST DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS WITH THE SUBLIME PORTE

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**Abstract:** In 1430 Dubrovnik's authorities decided to send ambassadors to the Sublime Porte for the first time. An important part of the preparatory activities was to decide to whom gifts should be presented, and what should be the nature and value of the gifts presented to the various recipients. Gifts were carefully wrapped diplomatic messages that their recipients could interpret in various ways. Gift rhetoric was used primarily to achieve strategic interests and was an ideological tool used both as a sign and an instrument. An analysis of the nature and value of the objects that ambassadors gave to their hosts reveals the “collective identity” of the community that preoccupied the City fathers, offers an insight into Dubrovnik's trade connections and local production of luxury goods, as well as their reception in a different cultural landscape.

Sources kept in the Dubrovnik State Archive allow us to reconstruct the list of Dubrovnik's diplomatic gifts presented to various individuals at the Sublime Porte from the time of the establishment of the first official diplomatic contacts until the City became a tributary state. The gifts can be categorized according to the political and social rank of the recipients. Interpretation of the reasoning underlying the selection of gifts offers an interdisciplinary approach to the analysis of their pragmatic purposes, their origin and production, their value (economic, social, cultural, practical, emotional), and manipulation of their usage. As well as influencing both contemporary and future Ragusan – Ottoman relations, the gifts encouraged symbolic, material, and cultural exchanges between diverse civilizations.

**Keywords:** Dubrovnik, Ottoman Empire, diplomatic gifts, material culture, diplomacy, 15<sup>th</sup> century

**Apstrakt:** 1430. godine Dubrovačka Republika uputila je svoje prvo službeno diplomatsko poslanstvo na Visoku Portu. Važan dio pripremnih radnji za odašiljanje poslanstva bio je odabir vrste i vrijednosti poklona za pripadnike osmanske vladajuće hijerarhije. Gradske vlasti nastojale su pomno osmišljenim odabirom poklona dosegnuti željene pragmatične ciljeve. Pokloni su istovremeno odašiljali poruke o “kolektivnom identitetu” zajednice, dubrovačkim trgovinskim vezama i ekonomskoj snazi, lokalnim sirovinama i njihovoj obradi, dominantnim trendovima te recepciji predmeta materijalnog svijeta u drugačijem kulturološkom pejzažu. Diplomatski darovi nedvojbeno su utjecali i oblikovali daljnji razvoj dubrovačko-osmanskih odnosa, ali su istovremeno omogućili simboličku, materijalnu i kulturološku razmjenu među različitim civilizacijama.

**Ključne riječi:** Dubrovnik, Osmansko Carstvo, diplomatski pokloni, materijalna kultura, diplomacija, 15. stoljeće

## Introduction

From the earliest times, prominent thinkers of Western civilization gave much attention to gifts in their writings. Because of the complexities associated with gift-giving, their analyses included anthropological, sociological, literary, ethical, economic, psychological, historical, and other metanarrative perspectives. Since the 1990s a cultural turn in historiography stirred up interest in material culture as a new paradigm to the traditional history of diplomacy. Studies on diplomatic gifts reinforced with new socio- and cultural-historical perspectives opened a new set of research questions. Recent scholarship has put a great deal of emphasis on diplomatic gifts as powerful tools of non-verbal communication that could express messages regarding political and social power, economic relations, and identity construction, by the virtue of their value (material, practical, artistic, symbolic, and emotional).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Examples regarding Muslim lands can be found in: Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Practicing Diplomacy in the Mamluk Sultanate. Gifts and Material Culture in the Medieval Islamic World*, London – New York: I. B. Tauris, 2016; Sinem Arcaç, *Gifts in Motion, Ottoman-Safavid Cultural Exchange*,

This study aims at exploring diplomatic gifts in specific historical situations relying on the interdisciplinary field of study that has provided a range of theoretical frameworks for the interpretation of the polysemantic meaning of objects in transcultural diplomacy. Previous studies, dedicated to the interpretation of early diplomatic contacts between Dubrovnik and the Sublime Porte, did not recognize gifts as key actors for the mediation of diplomatic negotiation, as well as the whole ceremonial *mise en scène* of the gift exchange protocol between diverse diplomatic cultures.<sup>2</sup> Material culture aspects and meaning of gifts may offer the gain in knowledge regarding specific Ragusan values of self-representation. Simultaneously, focus on gift-giving practices offers insights into the financial history of Ragusan diplomacy, its trade connections, the origin of the gifted objects, the method of their production, the current trends, etc.

Overall, the study is not merely focused on the symbolic meaning of the gifted object but also their materiality. I argue that gift-giving practice was not an ephemeral phenomenon but rather had a great impact on shaping cultural and political relations between the two courts. At this place, it should be emphasized that analysis is mostly focused on official institutional contacts visible in public ceremonies of gift-giving initiated from Dubrovnik, while reciprocal contacts between the “East” and the “West” as well as an analysis of the informal and more intimate relationship between negotiators were left aside.

Archival seria *Litterae et Commissiones Levantis (Lettere di Levante)*, vol. X–XVI, preserves instructions for eight embassies sent to the Sublime Porte from the time that the first official Ragusan-Ottoman diplomatic

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1501–1618. (Ph.D. thesis – unpublished), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2012. On the possibilities of objects to be shaped by human intervention, but also to consequently influence individuals and social groups during the medieval and early modern period, see: *Feeling Things: Objects and Emotions through History*, eds. Stephanie Downes – Sally Holloway – Sarah Randles, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Boško I. Bojović, *Raguse et l'Empire Ottoman (1430–1520) les actes impériaux ottomans en vieux-serbe de Murad II à Selim Ier*, Paris: Association Pierre Belon, 1998; Ivan Božić, *Dubrovnik i Turska u XIV i XV veku*, Beograd: Srpska akademija nauka (hereinafter: SAN), 1952.

contacts were established in 1430, until the City became a tributary state in 1458.<sup>3</sup> From these instructions, it is often possible to reconstruct knowledge about the gifts which the ambassadors took to their hosts, although listing their value was not a regular practice. Information about the material value of the presents can be complemented by reference to the series: *Acta Consilii Rogatorum*, vol. IV–XVI, and *Acta Consilii Maioris*, vol. IV–XI, while political decisions preserved in *Acta Consilii Minoris*, vol. V–XIV, offers insights into the practical activities that preceded the ambassadorial departure.

In the 1430s, the Republic of Dubrovnik entered a conflict with the Bosnian duke Radoslav Pavlović. Historiographically, this conflict became known as the War of Konavle (1430–1432). Its course is an example of how medieval intellectual and political frames surrounding a system of dependency that featured various jurisdiction levels were not set in stone.<sup>4</sup> Institutionally recognized balances of power co-existed with numerous and overlapping informal relationships within the social and ideological context of the time. In times of crisis (i.e. the war over the Konavle region), the conflicted parties used diplomacy to win over not only those who depended on them but also everybody they thought could speed up realization of their pragmatic goals. The Ottoman Sultan Murad II (1421–1444; 1446–1451) was the key arbitrator in the War of Konavle, who had made earlier attempts of the City to delay an official diplomatic representation to the Sublime Porte untenable.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The extensive study of Ragusan position towards the Ottoman Empire can be found in: Lovro Kunčević, “Janus faced Sovereignty: The International Status of the Ragusan Republic in the Early Modern Period”, in: *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, eds. Gábor Kármán – Lovro Kunčević, Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2013, 91–122.

<sup>4</sup> Rumours about the alliance between Sandalj, Radoslav Pavlović, and certain other Bosnian noblemen against the Bosnian king Tvrtko II recorded in March 1431 confirm this theory the best, National archive in Dubrovnik (hereinafter: DAD), *Lettere di Levante* (hereinafter: *Let. di Lev.*), ser. 27/1, vol. XI, f. 21r (10 Mar 1431).

<sup>5</sup> The government voted on the decision at the beginning of August 1430 with 30 votes for and 2 against, regardless of its potential risk, DAD, *Acta Consilii Rogatorum* (hereinafter: *Cons. Rog.*), ser. 3, vol. IV, f. 211v, (8 Aug 1430). The Grand Council confirmed

According to J. T. Godbout and A. Caillé *gifts are signifying a completely willful exchange of goods and favours without expecting anything in return.*<sup>6</sup> If we take as a valid their definition of a gift it is highly questionable that we can find them in the sphere of diplomacy, where they were obligatory. The absence or inappropriateness of gifts was perceived as an insult that could gradually give rise to a serious incident, and which could even end up with an open clash.<sup>7</sup> Presentation of gifts to visiting ambassadors was also an unwritten rule.<sup>8</sup> The problem of reciprocal gift-giving, however, as it is seen by M. Mauss<sup>9</sup> and scholars who have continued to develop theoretical understandings of the gift<sup>10</sup> with its complexity goes beyond the scope of this paper. A number

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the decision with 67 votes for and 18 against, DAD, *Acta Consilii Maioris* (hereinafter: *Cons. Maius*), ser. 4, vol. IV, f. 97r, (9 Aug 1430). Among other reasons that caused the government in Dubrovnik to reach such decision, the literature mentions Murad II's request to form diplomatic liaisons under the threat of armed conflict, Ćiro Truhelka, "Konavoski rat (1430–1433)", in: *Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja BiH*, Sarajevo: Zemaljski muzej, 1917, no. 29, 175–176.

<sup>6</sup> Jacques T. Godbout, *The Word of the Gift*, Montreal – Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998, 20; Alain C. Caillé, "The Double Inconceivability of the Pure Gift", in: *Angelaki*, 2001, vol. 6, no. 2, 37.

<sup>7</sup> There are a few examples from later medieval Dubrovnik's history which confirm that. See: Nella Lonza, *Kazalište vlasti, ceremonijal i državni blagdani Dubrovačke Republike u 17. i 18. stoljeću*, Zagreb – Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti (hereinafter: HAZU) u Dubrovniku, 2009, 188–189, 205.

<sup>8</sup> Donald E. Queller, *The Office of Ambassador in the Middle Ages*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967, 203.

<sup>9</sup> See: Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The form and the reason for exchange in archaic societies*, London and New York: Routledge, 2002.

<sup>10</sup> Just to mention a few of them: Natalie Z. Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000; Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008; Arnoud-Jan Bijsterveld, "The Medieval Gift as Agent of Social Bonding and Political Power: A Comparative Approach", in: *Medieval Transformations: Texts, Power, and Gifts in Context*, eds.: Esther Cohen – Mayke B. de Jong, Leiden: Brill, 2001; *Negotiating the Gift: Pre-modern Figurations of Exchange*, eds. Gadi Algazi – Valentin Groebner – Bernhard Jussen, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003; *The Gift: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*, ed. Aafke E. Komter, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996; *The Question of the Gift: Essays Across Disciplines*, ed. Mark Osteen, London – New York: Routledge, 2014; Maurice Godelier, *The Enigma of the Gift*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999; Helmuth Berking, *Sociology of Giving*, London – Thousand

of scholars have studied gifts sent to the Ottomans from different European courts in the early modern period.<sup>11</sup> Although examining a later period than the materials here, their research provides models for certain methodological approaches to data analysis<sup>12</sup> and useful comparative material.<sup>13</sup>

In the process of standardization of Dubrovnik-Ottoman relations, diplomatic gifts carried many important messages, so it is not surprising that the City fathers gave them full attention. According to H. Berking, gift-giving can be divided into several phases. After a choice of gift has been made, the physical act of giving follows, which is continued with an understanding of personal acts and motives, as well as set rules.<sup>14</sup> Analysis of Ragusan diplomatic gifts to the Ottomans at a delicate moment of determining the position of the City towards the invading force from East displays all the above-mentioned elements, but at the same time offers a considerably wider range of interpretative possibilities.

Gifts were important tools of non-verbal communication used to transmit favourable messages regarding the City image, as well as its ruling class. Authorities tried to match the gifts and their messages to the individual recipient, having in mind the local Ottoman hierarchy of power relations. Presents were intended to create an atmosphere of trust, satisfaction, facilitate negotiations, enable the realization of desired objectives, and create conditions for close mutual relationships in the future. Their effects and consequences were

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Oaks – New Delhi: Sage Publications Ltd, 1999; Anthony Cutler, “Significant Gifts: Patterns of Exchange in Late Antique, Byzantine, and Early Islamic Diplomacy”, in: *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 2008, vol. 38, no. 1, 79-101.

<sup>11</sup> The most important studies that offer excellent interpretations of problems discussed in this article, but only in a later time frame are written by Vesna Miović. See: *Dubrovačka diplomacija u Istanbulu*, Zagreb – Dubrovnik: HAZU – Zavod za povijesne znanosti u Dubrovniku, 2003; Vesna Miović Perić, “Bosanski beglerbeg i hercegovački sandžakbeg i diplomacija Dubrovačke Republike”, in: *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku*, 2000, no. 38, 121-164.

<sup>12</sup> See: Peter Burschel, “A Clock for the Sultan: Diplomatic Gift-giving from an intercultural Perspective”, in: *Medieval History Journal*, 2013, no. 16, 547-563.

<sup>13</sup> Claudia Swan, “Birds of Paradise for the Sultan: Early 17th-century Dutch-Turkish encounters and the uses of wonder”, in: *Zeventiende Eeuw*, 2013, vol. 29, no. 1, 49-63.

<sup>14</sup> H. Berking, *Sociology of Giving*, 4.

hard to predict in the “liminal space”<sup>15</sup> where two different cultures encountered each other. The messages intended to be conveyed by gifts could be interpreted incorrectly because a shared cultural code still did not exist. On the other hand, the diplomatic encounters of two different cultures opened up the space for cross-cultural object transfer, knowledge regarding material production, and its usage.<sup>16</sup> This exchange was especially visible in establishing possible trade connections by promoting local production, which could be potentially beneficial for the Ragusan economy.<sup>17</sup>

Eventually, repetition of gift transmission via Ragusan embassies to the Ottomans resulted in the transformation of initial confusion into a relatively fixed gift-giving practice that can be considered to correspond with P. Bourdieu's term *habitus*.<sup>18</sup> Bourdieu argues that “habitus is created by a kind of interplay between the two over time: dispositions that are both shaped by past events and structures, and that shape current practices and structures.”<sup>19</sup> With the passage of time, Ragusan political authorities acquired certain experience-based knowledge that guided their gift decisions,<sup>20</sup> although those decisions could be alternated under unexpected situations or over a *long durée*.

<sup>15</sup> The concept of liminality was developed by Victor Turner at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On this occasion it is used to describe transitional space on which different identities, cultures, and traditions meet.

<sup>16</sup> Of special interest are terms of cultural transfer and cultural blending confirmed on many occasions in Dubrovnik's diplomatic contacts with the Ottoman Empire in the later period. For some examples see: V. Miović, *Dubrovačka diplomacija*, 239-240.

<sup>17</sup> This tendency was quite common practice. For example, Dutch diplomatic present for the sultan included domestic goods such as butter, edammer cheese, and tulip bulbs, C. Swan, “Birds of Paradise”, 53.

<sup>18</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge – New York – Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

<sup>19</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, London: Routledge, 1984, 170.

<sup>20</sup> Ottoman presents for their European hosts were much more modest. They had a strong symbolic meaning which was focused to prove the sultan's supremacy over the Christian West. Ottomans started to send luxury objects towards European courts quite late, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. For some examples see: Maria Pia Pedani, “Ambassadors' travels from the East to the Venice”, in: *Tropes du voyage. Le voyage dans la littérature Arabe*, ed. Antonella Ghersetti; *Annali di ca' Foscari*, 2009, vol. XLVIII, no. 3, 190.

## The motives behind gift selection

How others perceived them was important to the City fathers. Bearing in mind their growing foreign policy self-consciousness, the political leaders of the City were therefore concerned that interpretation of the various characteristics of the gifts would enhance the Republic's image. The choice of gifts sent strong messages regarding the ideologically shaped communal identity features formed by the authorities as well as their views about the intended recipients at the Sublime Porte, the foremost being the desired messages that they wanted to create a mutually beneficial relationship of the subjects involved in negotiation processes.<sup>21</sup> The selection of gifts was a delicate matter because first impressions created on initial contact were important. The perception of each of the participants was influenced by their own interests, emotions, impulses, wishes, and assumptions regarding the other, and these assumptions could sometimes be superficial or even completely wrong.

Trade between the Ottoman Empire and Dubrovnik had started much earlier than the establishment of the first official diplomatic contact. I. Božić points out that perception of the Turks in the records of Dubrovnik's Councils developed from *Timor Turcorum* to *pratica cum Turchis*.<sup>22</sup> Although the information that circulated thanks to numerous merchants, pilgrims, war prisoners, spies, ambassadors, and foreign travelers contributed to their knowledge of each other, there was still much space for expansion of the "collective memory"<sup>23</sup> of the mutual relationship. The "collective memory" in the sphere of diplomacy emerges from previous contacts,

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<sup>21</sup> Lee Anne Fennell, "Unpacking the gift: Illiquid goods and empathetic dialogue", in: *The Question of the Gift: Essays Across Disciplines*, ed. Mark Osteen, London – New York: Routledge, 2002, 94.

<sup>22</sup> According to Ivan Božić the initial fear of the City Councils is gradually altered with cooperation on the daily basis, *Dubrovnik i Turska*, 7-8.

<sup>23</sup> For the detailed theoretical background analyses of the term see: James V. Wertsch – Henry L. Roediger III, "Collective memory: Conceptual foundations and theoretical approaches", in: *Memory*, 2008, vol. 16, no. 3, 318-326; Noa Gedi – Yigal Elam, "Collective Memory – What Is It?", in: *History and Memory*, 1996, vol. 8, no. 1, 30-50.

formal and informal meetings with various individuals and social groups, exchanged gifts, etc.<sup>24</sup>

An important part of the preparatory activities for an ambassador's departure was the decision regarding the type and value of the gifts to be taken. It was crucial that the list of presents was adjusted to suit the particularities of a specific moment. The City fathers were aware that a gift represented a carefully wrapped diplomatic message which could be interpreted in various ways. It was not surprising, therefore, that they dedicated full attention to their choices.

Ragusan authorities were quite cautious but also bewildered during the preparation for the departure of their first ambassadors to the Sublime Porte regarding to whom the gifts should be presented, and what the value of the gifts should be. Firstly they sought help from their neighbour, the Bosnian duke Sandalj Hranić.<sup>25</sup> He had rich personal experience in dealing with the Ottomans, which Dubrovnik's government did not fail to use.<sup>26</sup> After these consultations, the Senate was ready to make a decision but only for a short period. After two weeks the gift list was revised. From the comparison of the first and the second versions of the gift list, it is obvious that the value of certain presents increased.<sup>27</sup> Even the revised list was not identical to that included in the instructions for the ambassadors,<sup>28</sup> so it seems possible that it was altered for a second time. This demonstrates that City councilors were well aware of what was at stake in the choice of gifts. If a gift was too modest, it could offend the recipient, complicate the work of the ambassadors,

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<sup>24</sup> More about the interpersonal relationship of the Ragusan ambassadors sent to the Sublime Porte in the period of interest can be found in: Valentina Šoštarić, "Interpersonal Networks of the First Ambassadors of Dubrovnik to the Sublime Porte", *Mediterranean studies*, 29, 2021, 2; 213-247.

<sup>25</sup> *Cons. Rog.*, vol. IV, f. 212v (8 Aug 1430).

<sup>26</sup> The duke made first military contact with the Ottomans as early as the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. He had been a vassal perhaps even since 1415, and definitely since 1418. For further reading see: Esad Kurtović, *Veliki vojvoda bosanski Sandalj Hranić Kosača*, Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2009, 211-212.

<sup>27</sup> The list of gifts is confirmed on Aug 17<sup>th</sup> 1430, *Cons. Rog.*, vol. IV, f. 219v, but after a week it was revised, *Ibid.*, f. 224v (25 Aug 1430).

<sup>28</sup> *Lett. di Lev.*, vol. X, f. 215v (13 Sep 1430).

and put future relations at risk. If it was too lavish, it could become an unnecessary burden expected regularly. By over-stating the poverty of the Republic ruling class of the City tried to diminish Ottoman material expectations.<sup>29</sup> Although Dubrovnik's government did not flaunt gifts, they knew that presents could influence the course of negotiations.<sup>30</sup> Undoubtedly, the motives behind gift selection need to be placed in the context of current and desired relations between the small European Christian city-state and the powerful conqueror from the East. The search for "an ideal calculation"<sup>31</sup> is confirmed by different verbal strategies used in public speeches of Ragusan ambassadors in front of their host. A discourse regarding City poverty, due to infertile soil, was regularly employed, although this was not reflected in the actual balance of the City's treasury.<sup>32</sup>

In selecting an appropriate gift, the emotional reaction of the recipient could not be neglected. If the gift matched the receiver's taste and desires, it had a capacity to provoke positive emotions, but if the recipient was

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 211v (13 Sept 1430); *Ibid.*, ff. 213v-214r (13 Sept 1430); *Ibid.*, vol. XIII, ff. 46v-47r (2 Oct 1441); *Ibid.*, f. 56r (15 Dec 1441); *Ibid.*, ff. 191v-192r (no date). The same approach has been employed by Ragusan ambassadors sent to the Sublime Porte after 1458, when Dubrovnik was the Ottoman tributary state. See: V. Miović, *Dubrovačka diplomacija*, 201-210.

<sup>30</sup> Mihaloğlu Mehmed-bey's advice to Dubrovnik's ambassador to bribe the viziers with 20.000 ducats supports this theory, *Lett. di Lev.* vol. XI, f. 35v (no date). Likewise, the government in Dubrovnik advised their ambassador to say that he was on his way to take presents to the Porte (since *there is no other way of expressing tribute*) in case Ottoman authorities in Pristina or elsewhere attempted to send him back home, *Ibid.*, f. 49v (28 Jul 1431).

<sup>31</sup> In this context "an ideal calculation" refers to an approach that is embedded in practice that implies that the lowest possible investment gains the highest return.

<sup>32</sup> More about different verbal strategies used to represent the collective identity of Ragusa in the 'speech acts' of Ragusan ambassadors sent to the Sublime Porte in the first half of the 15th century see: Valentina Zovko, "Communication and political identity formation: Dubrovnik's first ambassadors to the Sublime Porte". *Tabula: časopis Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta Jurja Dobrile u Puli* 14 (2016): pp. 94-96. For further reading about financial stability of the Republic see: Oleh Havrylyshyn and Nora Srzentić, *Economy of Ragusa, 1300-1800. The Tiger of Medieval Mediterranean*. Zagreb: Croatian National Bank, 2014: pp. 41-46. Detailed analysis on the specific shaping of Dubrovnik's identity offers Lovro Kunčević's study, *Mit o Dubrovniku: diskursi o identitetu renesansnoga Grada*. Zagreb - Dubrovnik: Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, Zavod za povijesne znanosti u Dubrovniku, 2015.

displeased, the consequences could be quite unpleasant. City fathers could devise a self-constructed identity in order to match the chosen gifts with the different values and beliefs of their recipients. The practice of devising a self-constructed identity was not accepted at all. Authorities decided instead to immensely promote local production of luxury objects, which could be circulated within a broad Islamic market.

The type of gift and its monetary value were categorized according to the status of the recipient in an Ottoman hierarchy of power relations. The list of gifts included the name and/or function of its recipient, in order from the most prominent office to the least respected.<sup>33</sup> The potential of material objects to regulate social relations between people was well known to City authorities. They were used for this purpose even within the City borders. For instance, B. Kotruljević<sup>34</sup> and N. Gozze<sup>35</sup> are appalling with those who are blurring the borders between social classes with the choice of their wardrobe. As opposed to the practice of blurring the borders between social groups, with the personal garment selection, they praise “costume politico”, in other words dressing appropriately to the individual’s status.<sup>36</sup>

Beyond any doubt, the choice of gifts sent to the Ottomans from Dubrovnik in their initial diplomatic contacts was a very challenging and complex task. The City fathers had to dedicate much attention to various aspects of gift selection to achieve desired outcomes. Their choices depended on the economic, symbolic, and emotional value of the certain item, its appreciation in Islamic societies, the gift’s origin and methods of production, the messages attributed to the gift that could be associated with

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<sup>33</sup> Many examples showing a richer gift going to a higher-valued person in the hierarchy of power, and a modest one to lower-ranked officials can be found in chapter 7. *Addenda*.

<sup>34</sup> Benedikt Kotruljević, *O trgovini i savršenom trgovcu*, Dubrovnik: DTS, 1989, 395-398.

<sup>35</sup> Nikola Gučetić, *Upravljanje obitelji*, ed. Marinko Šišak, Zagreb: Biblioteka Scopus, 1998, 161, 163.

<sup>36</sup> Zdenka Jankević Römer, “Nasilje zakona: Gradska vlast i privatni život u kasnosrednjovjekovnom i ranonovovjekovnom Dubrovniku”, in: *Anali zavoda za povijesne znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti u Dubrovniku*, 2003, no. 41, 28; Zdenka Janeković Römer, *Okvir slobode. Dubrovačka vlastela između srednjovjekovlja i humanizma*, Zagreb – Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 1999, 344-346.

the giver's identity, etc. Despite initial puzzlement, we can conclude that the initial gift list was not much altered in a significant way over a few decades. In other words, the Ragusans did not fail at one of the most important tests when the establishment of official diplomatic relations with the Ottomans came into question.

### **Ceremonial practice – a slippery slope**

An ambassador's public performance became over time the subject of a diplomatic protocol. One of the most coherent parts of the diplomatic protocol was evaluating tokens of appreciation and the value of presents that ambassadors took with them from Dubrovnik. Problems appeared due to different perceptions of the world, with certain countries *speaking in different languages* when the diplomatic ceremony is in question.<sup>37</sup> The first ambassadors to represent Dubrovnik at the Porte faced certain difficulties since they were not familiar with the etiquette there because there were no common ceremonial rules for such occasions.<sup>38</sup> The problem was much bigger than the ceremonial differences between Europe and the Islamic world. The Ottomans were only just shaping their administration and diplomatic ceremony, which was codified in the second half of the fifteenth century during the rule of Mehmed the Conqueror (1432–1481).<sup>39</sup> Certain diplomatic rituals existed even before he took the rule, but it was not systematized, and therefore it is not surprising that, in their work, the ambassadors from Dubrovnik encountered certain ambiguities. Regarding the ceremony of gift-giving, the questions that concerned the government were “Should the ambassadors deliver the presents privately or publicly, simultaneously or over a period of time, to the sultan personally or to the person representing him if he was absent?”<sup>40</sup> The ambassadors did not have clear instructions regarding the ceremony of

<sup>37</sup> Julia Barrow, “Demonstrative Behaviour and Political Communication in Later Anglo-Saxon England”, in: *Anglo-Saxon England*, 2007, no. 36, 148-150.

<sup>38</sup> Z. Janeković Römer, *Okvir slobode*, 138-139.

<sup>39</sup> Emire C. Muslu, *Ottoman-Mamluk relations: Diplomacy and Perceptions*, (PhD thesis – unpublished), Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2007, 165.

<sup>40</sup> *Lett. di Lev.*, vol. X, f. 211r, (13 Sep 1430).

handling presents so they had to act according to their own judgment after consulting with the viziers.<sup>41</sup> This is a site of negotiation between them, as Ragusans tried to find out what to do on the advice of locals<sup>42</sup> but also made their own judgment relying on their knowledge and previous experience in the diplomatic service.<sup>43</sup> In the period prior to Fatih's Kanunname the protocol of gift-giving was not in order and the ambassadors were free to do what they find the most suitable practice after they had consultations with the high-ranked Ottomans.

The concerns of the authorities clearly showed the possibilities of gift usage. As objects of display, they had public and visual value. According to J. Baudrillard their "sign value" is assigned by "the means by which objects acquire social meaning on the basis of a public code that relates them, and differences between them, to social position and differences between such position."<sup>44</sup> Gifts could be given in private but mostly they were presented in public as a part of the courtly performance. Each of the participants had a role in that "performative moment"<sup>45</sup> that portrayed the balance of power among them.

Despite ambassadors' acquisition of experience and knowledge, even a decade later authorities were not completely conversant with the protocol of gift-giving. In 1441 the City fathers wrote to their ambassadors: "...presentareti li (doni) quali al luogo et tempo quando a vuy parera secondo la lor costuma."<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> "A la Porta del Imperador Turcho dobiate spiar e bona et diligente informacion ouer delle usanze, modi et costumi i quali se costuma tenere usare et praticare in corte del imperador", *Lett. di Lev.*, vol. X, f. 211r (13 Sep 1430).

<sup>43</sup> "... e seguando in questo come e quanto sereti informadi e consigliati et a voi meglio parera", *Lett. di Lev.*, vol. X, f. 211r (13 Sep 1430).

<sup>44</sup> A. Cutler, "Significant Gifts", note 65, 92.

<sup>45</sup> John L. Austin's theory of speech act lay the foundation for performance studies, *How to Do Things With Words*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press: 1962. Mikhail M. Bakhtin brings in his work the expansion of that concept, *The Dialogic Imagination; Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

<sup>46</sup> *Lett. di Lev.*, vol. XIII, f. 40v (2 Aug 1441).

## Types of gifts

Gifts presented to the Ottomans can be categorized as *luxury goods*. Diplomatic gifts offered a means of establishing a direct link between luxury consumption and demands for ceremonial circumstances. They were flattering to the recipient whose status was confirmed by the choice of luxury items not accessible to others.

The presents that Ragusans gave to the Ottomans can be divided into three groups according to their type: the first includes furs, fabrics, and garments; the second various physical objects made of silver; and thirdly, money. Some objects that were quite common in the diplomatic practice of that period have not found a place on the lists. Gifts of food were completely left aside, and we can only guess the possible reasons for that. One of the possible explanations is that some types of food were hard to preserve over long distances. Neither was it usual to present weapons as gifts. Weapons were in most cases exchanged between Muslim rulers, while all the others (Christian diplomatic groups), even when in certain moments they were very close partners, were perceived as infidels.<sup>47</sup> That is confirmed by the fact that Sultan Murad justified his decision of signing a three-year treaty with the Hungarian king<sup>48</sup> in the presence of a Muslim ruler of a higher rank,<sup>49</sup> especially because ever since the times of the prophet Muhammad both sultans were obliged to fight against non-Muslim countries.<sup>50</sup> The symbolic meaning of gifts in weapons among Muslim societies demonstrated a legal right to rule so these were quite common gifts for a new sultan.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> For example, the initiative of Mehmed III in 1598 towards the French court was an isolated case, M. P. Pedani, "Ambassadors' travels", 191.

<sup>48</sup> For more details about this truce see: E. C. Muslu, *Ottoman-Mamluk relations*, 119.

<sup>49</sup> At that time the Mamluks, being heirs of the Abbasid Caliphate and rulers of Egypt and Syria, became leading protectors of Islam against Crusaders and Mongols (especially after they had stopped their progress at Ain Jalut in 1260).

<sup>50</sup> E. C. Muslu, *Ottoman-Mamluk relations*, 119.

<sup>51</sup> M. P. Pedani, "Ambassadors' travels", 191.

### *Fabric and fur*

Expensive textiles were commonly used for diplomatic purposes as gifts among the medieval social elite. Luxury textiles symbolized the authority, prosperity, and prestige of the regime, so they were often presented as diplomatic gifts between rulers. In Islamic societies, tribute is often paid in fabrics and clothing, which is an obvious sign of appreciation of these materials.<sup>52</sup> The length, width, numbers of layers, dyestuff, and quality of lining material of a garment contributed to an instant evaluation of its value.<sup>53</sup>

City authorities presented prominent representatives of the Ottoman court with luxurious fabrics. Analysis of the characteristics of a textile gift reveals a correspondence between quality and the political power of the recipient. For instance, satin velvets (*zetanin*<sup>54</sup> *a veluta*) were reserved exclusively for the sultan as it can be seen in decisions taken by the City fathers.<sup>55</sup> C. C. Frick has written that it was “one of the most luxurious and expensive fabrics in history. That was a silk fabric which had a single-height cut pile that contrasted with a voided pattern, the satin ground showing through.”<sup>56</sup> Its price was influenced by a very challenging production technique that required special weaving skills and techniques. Actually, silk was extremely rare, and to own a silk fabric was a sign of sovereignty.<sup>57</sup> In the fifteenth century, silk was still imported to the City: it was not until the beginning of the sixteenth century that it began to develop its own silk industry, thanks to foreign craftsmen. In addition to satin velvets, only the sultan was given brocade, which was a rich silk fabric on a satin background with an all-over interwoven design, empha-

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<sup>52</sup> S. Arcak, *Gifts in Motion*, note 144, 251.

<sup>53</sup> *Désirée* Koslin, “Value-added stuffs and shifts in meaning: An overview and case study of medieval textile paradigms”, in: *Encountering medieval textiles and dress. Objects, Texts, Images*, eds. *Désirée* Koslin – Janet E. Snyder, New York – Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, 236.

<sup>54</sup> *Zetanino* is an Arabic name for the Chinese town Tseutung which was located on the silk route.

<sup>55</sup> *Cons. Rog.*, vol. IV, f. 224v (25 Aug 1430).

<sup>56</sup> Carole C. Frick, *Dressing Renaissance Florence. Families, Fortunes & Fine Clothing*, Baltimore – London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2002, 98.

<sup>57</sup> Oleg Grabar, “The Shared Culture of Objects”, in: *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. Henry Maguire, Washington: Dumbarton Oak Research Library and Collection, 1998, 608-609.

sized by contrasting surfaces of colors, in this particular case with golden thread.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, grand viziers received scarlet fabric that was also characteristic of the ruling class in the Ragusan society, but of a lower rank in comparison with the fabrics reserved for the sultan. The word scarlet does not have a classical root, and various possibilities have been discussed by several authors, notably J. Munro who suggested that it originally denoted high-quality woolen broadcloth made from the best English wool and dyed with the costly red insect dye kermes (known at the time in England as “grain” and in Italy as “grana”).<sup>59</sup> Therefore, in the late medieval period *scarlet* referred to the most expensive woolen material, but it was also an adjective of colour.<sup>60</sup> Wool as a most important and quite well-distributed fabric was not as valuable as expensive silk and brocade.<sup>61</sup> At the beginning of the fifteenth century, the people of Dubrovnik were producing their own wool thanks to Italian craftsman Pietro de Pantella and his half-brother Paulus de Pantella. With their initiative, the mill at Pile was built in 1419. All the phases of production, from raw material to the final product, were included.<sup>62</sup> The wool produced in Dubrovnik was not of such good quality as English, French or Italian wool, which was regularly imported to the City.<sup>63</sup> Hence, it is more likely that the wool sent to the Sublime Porte was imported. Different wool quality was also used to express messages regarding the status of its recip-

<sup>58</sup> *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Polymers*, ed. Jan W. Gooch, New York: Springer-Velag, 2011, 129.

<sup>59</sup> For Ragusan case see: Dragutin Roller, *Dubrovački zanati u XV. i XVI. stoljeću*, Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti (hereinafter: JAZU), 1951, 58-59.

<sup>60</sup> John Munro, “The Medieval Scarlet and Economics of Sartorial Splendour”, in: *Cloth and Clothing in Medieval Europe: Essays in Memory of Professor E. M. Carus-Wilson*. eds. Negley B. Harte – Kenneth G. Ponting, London: Pasold Research Fund – Heineman, 1983, 13.

<sup>61</sup> D. Koslin, “Value-added stuffs”, 234.

<sup>62</sup> Dragutin Roller, “Naša prva manufaktura sukna u XV stoljeću u Dubrovniku”, in: *Ekonomski preglad*, Zagreb, 1950, vol. I, no. 2, 193; Paola Pinelli, “Piero Pantella from Piacenza and the Textile Industry of Dubrovnik (Ragusa) in the First Half of the Fifteenth Century”, in: *Dubrovnik annals*, 2013, no. 17, 25-36. In that period the wool production included 27 different processes. See: Franco Franceschi, *Oltre il “Tumulto”: Il lavoratori fiorentini dell’Arte della lana fra Tre e Quattrocento*, Florence: Casa Editrice Leo S. Olschki, 1993, 33-38.

<sup>63</sup> Kosta Vojnović, *Bratovštine i obrtne korporacije u Republici Dubrovačkoj od XIII. do konca XVIII. vijeka*, Zagreb: JAZU, 1900, 23-27.

ients. Scarlet was reserved for the grand viziers<sup>64</sup> while the lower-ranked Isa-bay received 4 pieces<sup>65</sup> of wool fabric worth 70 ducats.<sup>66</sup> Besides better quality, woolen fabric for viziers measured one *kavetac*,<sup>67</sup> which is 1–1.5m longer than that received by Isa-bay.

The material value of fabric also depended on the dyestuff used. The name given to the colour was a sign of the way the fabric was colored, and was a direct indicator of fabric value and the origin of the dyestuff. Although there were cultural preferences for fabric color, popularity changed with time and place, consequently shaping fashion. Colour and the dyestuff used were visual identifiers of the value, social significance, and appropriateness of a fiber.<sup>68</sup> For instance, only the sultan received crimson satin velvets. Crimson had different hues in general, inclining to purple, which was reserved for majesty in Latin West.<sup>69</sup> Crimson (“*cremesi*”) was a colour term reserved for silk, which reflected the dyestuff used for this fabric. *Cremesi* is a term derived from Arabic “*qirmiz*”, meaning kermes, indicating that true crimson had been achieved with an insect dye.<sup>70</sup> *Cremesi* was one of the highest quality, most brilliant, and longest-lasting crimson dyestuff used in the fifteenth century, because it was made from the desiccated bodies of the pregnant females of kermes lice (esp. certain Asian species of these insects, probably *Porphyrophora hameli*, found in

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<sup>64</sup> *Lett. di Lev.*, vol. XI, ff. 50rv (28 Jul 1431).

<sup>65</sup> *Cons. Rog.*, vol. IV, f. 224v (25 Aug 1430).

<sup>66</sup> 1 pezza = twelve to fourteen canne. Canna (pl. canne) = three to four braccia. C. C. Frick, *Dressing Renaissance Florence*, 101, 226. Braccio (pl. Braccia) was an arm's length. Venetian braccio measured 63.8 cm for silk and 88.2 cm for wool, Stefano Carboni, *Venice and the Islamic world, 828–1797*, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, Yale University Press, Institut de Monde Arabe (Paris), 2007, 372.

<sup>67</sup> 1 *kavec* = 11–12 *lakats*, which is approximately 6–6.6 metres, V. Miović, *Dubrovačka diplomacija*, 51.

<sup>68</sup> Patricia L. Baker, *Islamic Textiles*, London: British Museum Press, 1995, 15.

<sup>69</sup> D. Koslin, “Value-added stuffs”, 235.

<sup>70</sup> Lisa Monnas, “Some Medieval Colour Terms for Textile”, in: *Medieval Clothing and Textiles*, vol. 10, eds. Robin Netherton – Gale R. Owen-Crocker, Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2014, 46, note 123. More about dye-stuff used by the Ragusan manufacturer see: D. Roller, *Dubrovački zanati*, 58–59.

the Caucasus and Near East).<sup>71</sup> Although some of the fabrics for the grand viziers were also dyed in an undertone of red, there was a substantial difference regarding both the dyestuff used, as well as the type of the fabric. On the other hand, grand viziers were generally gifted with fibers dyed with *scarlato de grana*<sup>72</sup> or *panno de grana*.<sup>73</sup> Grana (“grain”) was a red dyestuff made from the dried bodies of the Mediterranean shield lice *Kermococcus vermilio* or *Coccus ilicis*, which looked like kernels of grain when dried, thus its name. By the fifteenth century, it was considered inferior to the richer red dye imported from the East (chermisi) because it was cheaper.

The symbolism of colour was frequently used to signal status. Hierarchical designation of colors was an important visible border sign of the power relations among individuals and socio-political groups. Only the sultan received sky blue<sup>74</sup> and black satin velvets,<sup>75</sup> as well as crimson. That can sound as a surprise at the first sight because blue and black are connected with deep sorrow, earthly abnegation, extreme asceticism, and supreme humility in the Middle Ages. Moreover, medieval research conducted for some European cities as Wien<sup>76</sup> and Sopron<sup>77</sup> clearly shows that the most common cloths were made in black. However, at the end of the Middle Ages, which is contemporary with the period of focus of this paper, blue and black had become the colours of princes and the urban aristocracy at the Latin West.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>71</sup> J. Munro, “The Medieval Scarlet”, 16-17.

<sup>72</sup> *Lett. di Lev.*, vol. XI, ff. 50rv (28 Jul 1431).

<sup>73</sup> *Lett. di Lev.*, vol. XI, f. 61v (2 Dec 1431); *Ibid.*, vol. XII, f. 213r (15 Jun 1441).

<sup>74</sup> *Cons. Rog.*, vol. IV, f. 224v (25 Aug 1430). Sky/celestial blue is described as “4/5 de uno biavo”, Giovanni Rebera, *Un manuale di tintoria del Quattrocento*, Milano: A. Giuffrè, 1970, 96.

<sup>75</sup> *Lett. di Lev.*, vol. XII, f. 213r (15 Jun 1441).

<sup>76</sup> Urs Martin Zahnd, “Spätmittelalterliche Bürgertestamente als Quellen zu Realienkunde und Sozialgeschichte”, in: *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 1988, vol. 96, no. 1-2, 64.

<sup>77</sup> Katalin Szende, “Besonderheiten und Unterschiede in der materiellen Kultur der Einwohnerschaft der königlichen Freistädte Pressburg und Ödenburg (1450-1490)”, in: *Alltag und materielle Kultur im mittelalterlichen Ungarn*, eds. Andreás Kubinyi – József Laszlovszky, Krems am Donau: Medium Aevum Quotidianum, book 22, 1991, 111-113.

<sup>78</sup> Herman Pleij, *Colors demonic&divine. Shades of meaning in the middle ages&after*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2004, 6; Françoise Piponnier – Perrine Mane, *Dress in the Middle*

The colour green also found its place amongst the gifted fabrics. In the Middle Ages, it was reserved for the privileged.<sup>79</sup> Green was produced in a wide range of shades from bright to dark and it seems that all of them were dyed with woad.<sup>80</sup> In Florentine *Trattato dell' arte della seta*, “verde bruno” (dark green) was among the most labor-intensive dyes to apply: “Dyers charged the silks merchants the same price for their work in producing verde bruni as for chermisi dyed twice, although the finished crimson fabrics, dyed with costlier ingredients, would have retailed more expensively.”<sup>81</sup> Although green was reserved for sultan and grand viziers, the choice of fabric was used to differ their ranks.<sup>82</sup> Fabrics that contained gold and silver<sup>83</sup> were quite popular for the Ottoman ruling elite. Usually, gold threads were added across the loom as a supplementary weft on a basic luxury fabric.<sup>84</sup> Silver and golden fabrics were reserved in Ragusan gift-giving practice for the sultan,<sup>85</sup> his brother,<sup>86</sup> and the bassa of Rumelia.<sup>87</sup>

Furs also had an important role among Ragusan diplomatic gifts. They enabled contrasting colour combinations, which was very desirable. Furs could be given separately or as a part of tailored cloths. On one occasion,

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Ages, New Haven – London: Yale University Press, 2007, 20. That is confirmed by the practice of French kings who were regularly crowned in blue, Margaret Scott, *Fashion in the Middle Ages*, Los Angeles: The Paul J. Getti Museum, 2011, 63, while Alfonso of Aragon mostly wore black, Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli, *Guardaroba medievale. Vesti e società al XIII al XVI secoli*, Bologna: Il Mulino, Saggi, 1999, 252.

<sup>79</sup> F. Piponnier – P. Mane, *Dress in the Middle Ages*, 105.

<sup>80</sup> L. Monnas, *Some Medieval Colours Terms for Textile*, 41.

<sup>81</sup> Lisa Monnas, *Merchants, Princes and Painters: Silk Fabrics in Italian and Northern Paintings, 1300–1550*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009, 24.

<sup>82</sup> The sultan's garment was made of silk velvets and fur and the vizeire's of wool, *Lett. di Lev.*, vol. XII, f. 213r (15 Jun 1441).

<sup>83</sup> *Lett. di Lev.*, vol. XII, f. 218r (without date), *Ibid.*, vol. XIII, f. 40v (2 Aug 1441); *Ibid.*, vol. XIV, f. 52r (15 Dec 1450).

<sup>84</sup> See Anne E. Wardwell, “The Stylistic Development of Fourteenth- and Fifteenth Century Italian Silk Design”, in: *Aachner Kunstblätter*, 1976/77, no. 47, 180.

<sup>85</sup> *Lett. di Lev.*, vol. XII, f. 213r (15 Jun 1441).

<sup>86</sup> *Lett. di Lev.*, vol. XIV, ff. 52r-53r (15 Dec 1450).

<sup>87</sup> *Lett. di Lev.*, vol. XIII, f. 40v (2 Aug 1441).

a sultan received 1,000 fine chivalric (*dossi*<sup>88</sup> *fini caualareschi*) and the same number of ermine fur.<sup>89</sup> Ermine was regarded as the finest fur in the Arab world of the later Middle Ages.<sup>90</sup> It was suitable for achieving colour contrast.<sup>91</sup> More often than ermine, the prized medieval vair was amongst Ragusan's diplomatic presents. Vair was the winter fur of the northern red squirrel imported from Baltic states or Russia, although it seems more likely that it was imported to Dubrovnik from its hinterland (Bosnia). In winter its fur turned from red, or grey streaked with red, to pale grey with a bluish tinge, with a white belly. The name vair refers to the whole skins derived from *varium opus*, and reflected the contrasting or varied effect of the grey backs and white bellies.<sup>92</sup> Backs and bellies could be sold separately, the bellies being more expensive than the backs. Vair was generally regarded in the later Middle Ages as the most valuable fur of all.<sup>93</sup> One overcoat given as a present to a sultan and grand viziers was made of the backs of 250 vairs.<sup>94</sup>

Another difference in the recipient status was stated by the number of received garments. For example, the sultan received three and each of the three viziers only one cloak.<sup>95</sup> On the other hand, a combination of textile

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<sup>88</sup> Literally "backs", skins of fur from the back of vair, were not as soft and therefore less expensive than pance, cut from the underbelly fur of the animal, C. C. Frick, *Dressing Renaissance Florence*, 168; Elspeth M. Veale, *The English Fur Trade in the Later Middle Ages*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966, 218.

<sup>89</sup> The white winter fur of the ermine (a member of the weasel family) was used widely in trim on clothing, but generally too costly for an entire lining. It was imported from Russia through Constantinople until 1453.

<sup>90</sup> John Gage, *Colour and Culture*, Singapore: Thames and Hudson, 1993, 82.

<sup>91</sup> In summer the ermine is brown, with a whitish throat, chest, and belly, and in its winter color phase has a white coat with a black tip of the tail.

<sup>92</sup> E. M. Veale, *The English Fur Trade*, 4, 223-225, 228; Daniel Phoenix, "Garments so Chequered: The Bible of Citeaux, the Bayeux Tapestry and the Vair Pattern", in: *The Antiquaries Journal*, 2010, no. 90, 196.

<sup>93</sup> J. Gage, *Colour and Culture*, 82.

<sup>94</sup> *Lett. di Lev.* vol. XI, ff. 50rv (28 Jul 1431).

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

and fur was reserved only for the sultan. *Vesta*<sup>96</sup> made of brocade with golden threads included 300 furs of ermine, and two other *veste* for the sultan were made of satin velvets and contained 600 vairs' backs.<sup>97</sup>

For R. Barthes the language of clothing was embedded in the way a garment is made, its construction, fabric, colour, and surface decoration.<sup>98</sup> Cloths and fabrics sent powerful messages regarding the political power of their recipients and were a visual metaphor for personal identity.<sup>99</sup> These served as a gesture of self-presentation in a political sphere by way of material culture.

### *Silverware*

The most common gifts for the Ottomans were textiles along with various objects made of silver, which could be gilded, including platters, caliches, plates, jugs, and goblets. They were reserved for high-ranked Ottoman officials, including the sultan. Only the sultan, however, was given silver boxes for preserving sweets, and a silver case with a cover.<sup>100</sup> On occasions when the sultan and grand viziers received the same silver object, the difference in the status of the recipients was expressed mostly by the number of gifts, rather than their weight (although it was not systematically recorded), and sometimes by their appearance.<sup>101</sup> If the number of plates is taken into consideration, for example, it can be concluded that the

<sup>96</sup> *Vesta* could be translated as a robe which was made without any sleeves, but they could be attached. It was worn equally by men and women, Goran Budeč, "Inventar dobara šibenskog patricija ser Jurja Kamenarića iz 1451. godine", in: *Zbornik Odsjeka povijesnih znanosti Zavoda povijesnih društvenih znanosti HAZU*, 2010, no. 28, 82.

<sup>97</sup> *Lett. di Lev.*, vol. XII, f. 213r (15 Jun 1441).

<sup>98</sup> Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1999, 13-27.

<sup>99</sup> Fred Davis, *Fashion, Culture and Identity*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992, 25.

<sup>100</sup> *Let. di Lev.*, vol. XI, f. 50r (28 Jul 1431); *Ibid.*, vol. XII, f. 213r (15 Jun 1441). In one place is stated that they had the same weight of 1½ libras, *Cons. Rog.*, vol. IV, f. 224v (25 Aug 1430). Dubrovnik's measurement for silver was *litra tanka* [thin litre, t/n], which amounted to 301.23 grams, Milan Rešetar, *Dubrovačka numizmatika*, vol. 1, Beograd: Srpska kraljevska akademija, 1924, 79.

<sup>101</sup> "...grandi, belli, mazori bochali, piu belle e piu grande taçe...", *Cons. Rog.*, vol. IV, f. 224v (25 Aug 1430); *Lett. di Lev.*, vol. X, f. 215v (13 Sep 1430).

sultan received regularly twice as many as the grand viziers, and sometimes that relation was even 3.5 higher in his favour.<sup>102</sup>

Objects of silver were very worthy and they expressed generosity and prosperity of the City.<sup>103</sup> In 1442 the annual payment of one thousand ducats in silverware was still named a “gift”.<sup>104</sup> C. Fisković has shown in his research that the golden period of Dubrovnik’s goldsmiths was the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. There were so many of them that the logical consequence was their organization of a guild. They obtained raw materials from nearby Serbian and Bosnian mines.<sup>105</sup> As a consequence, there was no need for foreign goldsmiths nor imported objects made of noble metals.<sup>106</sup> City authorities paid a lot of attention to the quality of finished products. The law regulated a special mix of silver that goldsmiths were obliged to use under the threat of severe punishments.<sup>107</sup> A state seal was applied to this silver as a visible sign of its quality.<sup>108</sup> Apart from its use as a proof of quality, the seal sent a message of urban self-presentation and was a very convenient reminder of the giver.<sup>109</sup> In a modern sense, by marking the product the City fathers protected the origin, originality, and quality of silver objects.<sup>110</sup> This was a rather common practice in the late Middle

<sup>102</sup> *Let. di Lev.*, vol. XII, f. 213r (15 Jun 1441); *Ibid.*, 218r (without date).

<sup>103</sup> Mario Damen, “Princely entries and gift exchange in the Burgundian Low Countries: a crucial link in late medieval political culture”, in: *Journal of Medieval History*, 2007, vol. 33, no. 3, 239.

<sup>104</sup> Ljubo Stojanović, *Stare srpske povelje i pisma*, vol. I/2, Beograd – Sremski Karlovci, 1934, 232-234.

<sup>105</sup> On one occasion Ragusan’s ambassadors were apologizing because they haven’t brought the present earlier. The reason was the shortage of silver, *Let. di Lev.*, vol. XIII, f. 100r (12 Jan 1443); DAD, *Acta Consilii Minoris* (hereinafter: *Cons. Minus*), ser. 5, vol. IX, f. 142v (28 Dec 1442).

<sup>106</sup> Cvito Fisković, “Dubrovački zlatari”, in: *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, 1949, vol. III, no. 1, 150.

<sup>107</sup> For instance, one of the possible punishments was cutting off the hand, C. Fisković, “Dubrovački zlatari”, 158.

<sup>108</sup> The same practice was applied to all the textiles produced in the City. See: D. Roller, *Dubrovački zanati*, 16. Even further, every manufacturer was obliged to put his own seal to all the textiles he produced, *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>109</sup> See: Valentin Groebner, *Liquid Assets, Dangerous Gifts: Presents and Politics at the End of the Middle Ages*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002, 32; M. Damen, “Princely entries”, 239.

<sup>110</sup> C. Fisković, “Dubrovački zlatari”, 150.

Ages not restricted to Dubrovnik: other European cities also engraved their symbols on silver jugs, pitchers, and cups.<sup>111</sup> The Ragusan seal included the representation of the head of the City patron St. Blasius (Vlaho) with mitre, and archival sources called it *Bulla Ragusina* or *Bulla Sancti Blasii*.<sup>112</sup> We assume that this was stamped on Ottoman-destined products. If that assumption is true then a visual representation of a saint might have been controversial for that audience. In this vein, one more possible approach should be emphasized: the gifted objects preserved a spirit of a giver and they are used as an instrument of transmitting messages regarding its moral, political, and religious qualities.<sup>113</sup>

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Ragusan goldsmiths were producing vast numbers of silverware objects which were sent as diplomatic gifts to foreign rulers and prominent political figures. For instance, Ragusan goldsmiths made silver objects<sup>114</sup> for the Hungarian and Croatian king Sigismund of Luxembourg on many occasions during the fifteenth century,<sup>115</sup> and in 1436 a huge order was made for Alfonso I, king of Aragon, Sicilia, and Sardinia.<sup>116</sup> Therefore, it's not surprising that silverware was the most common diplomatic gift for Ottomans. Ragusans did not fail to recognize characteristic artifacts in their selection of diplomatic gifts either as a sign of their artistic identity or as an instrument for promotion trade export. The number of objects made of silver was so high<sup>117</sup> that the goldsmiths raised their voices against the practice of the authorities consistently awarding orders to the same few

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<sup>111</sup> M. Damen, "Princely entries", 239.

<sup>112</sup> C. Fisković, "Dubrovački zlatari", 158.

<sup>113</sup> For Bert De Munck "the spirit" is reserved for the guild-based masters, in other words, the value which depends upon the status of its producers, "Artisans, Products and Gifts: Rethinking the History of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe", in: *Past and Present*, 2014, no. 224, 63-65.

<sup>114</sup> *Cons. Minus*, vol. VI, f. 52r (12 Jun 1433).

<sup>115</sup> *Diplomatarium relationum Reipublicae Ragusanae cum regno Hungariae*, eds. Joseph Gelcich – Ludwig Thallóczy, Budapest: Kiadja a M. Tud. Akadémia Tört. Bizottsága, 1887, 759, 763, 781, 794, 892.

<sup>116</sup> DAD, *Diversa Notariae* (hereinafter: *Div. Not.*), ser. 26, vol. XXI, f. 72r (22 Dec 1436).

<sup>117</sup> For instance just in one occasion Ottomans received 32, *Let. di Lev.*, vol. XII, f. 218r (without date) and on other 45 plates, *Let. di Lev.*, vol. XIV, f. 190v (without date).

smiths. They demanded that the orders be evenly distributed among the craftsmen, under the supervision of the guild. There were probably differences in the craftsmanship of the smiths, and authorities were concerned about the quality of the final products. Despite this, there is no reason to doubt the beauty of Ragusan silverware, which was very well accepted by the Ottomans. For example, it provoked the interest of sultan Mehmed II who wanted to learn more regarding the techniques of processing silver and gold. His inquiry to the City fathers resulted in the decision to send one of the goldsmiths. That was Paulus de Ragusio.<sup>118</sup> Moreover, he taught Sinan-Bey<sup>119</sup> to paint portraits in Istanbul, confirming the exchange of artistic skills between the West and the East.<sup>120</sup>

Although there were more than enough smiths to produce all of the silver objects needed as gifts, not all of the silver gifts were the work of local goldsmiths. Sources have recorded the decision regarding the purchase of some of the presents for the Ottomans from Venice in 1430.<sup>121</sup> On one other occasion, Dubrovnik's ambassador was ordered to buy silverware on his way to the Ottoman capital.<sup>122</sup> We can only speculate about the reasons behind these decisions. The eventual destiny of Ragusan silverware gifts after gifting to the Ottomans is mysterious. C. Swan points out that these gifts from various countries were regularly melted and transformed into money in the seventeenth century at the Sublime Porte.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> C. Fisković, "Dubrovački zlatari", 175.

<sup>119</sup> Nakkaş Sinan Bey is Ottoman court miniature painter who lived in the fifteenth century. He and his student Ahmed Sibilzade specialized into portrait paintings of Ottoman sultans. They made use of European techniques such as shading and perspective, Gábor Ágoston and Bruce Masters, *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*. Washington: Infobase Publishing, 2009: pp. 266-267.

<sup>120</sup> Claire Norton, "Blurring the Boundaries: Intellectual and Cultural Interaction between the Eastern and Western; Christian and Muslim Worlds", in: *The Renaissance and the Ottoman World*, eds. Anna Contadini – Claire Norton, Surrey – Burlington: Ashgate, 2013, 11.

<sup>121</sup> *Cons. Rog.*, vol. IV, f. 220r (17 Aug 1430).

<sup>122</sup> *Lett. di Lev.*, vol. XIII, f. 50r (2 Oct 1441).

<sup>123</sup> C. Swan, "Birds of Paradise", note 22.

## *Money*

There is a current presumption in the scholarship on gift-giving that gifts of money are not suitable for everyone, and that usually, it is not well received.<sup>124</sup> However, in the case of the Ottoman ruling elite, the practice was quite the opposite: in fact, they often asked for more. Nevertheless, money was not regarded as a suitable gift universally. Money was almost never given to a sultan,<sup>125</sup> while it was quite usual as a gift for other prominent men who enjoyed official socio-political status to influence the outcome of Dubrovnik's diplomatic efforts at the Ottoman court.<sup>126</sup> Such contacts behind closed doors were promising because some of the high-ranking Ottoman officials originated from the conquered Balkan lands. One of them was Mahmud Pasha Angelović (1420–1474).<sup>127</sup> He was the bassa of Rumelia in 1441 and 1453, and the grand vizier in the periods 1453–1467 and 1472–73. Even more significant for Ragusans was his origin, well indicated by his nicknames: *Croat* and *Bosnian*.<sup>128</sup> Shared cultural backgrounds, ethnic solidarity as well as mutual understanding, uninterrupted by language barriers, could be beneficial. Rapid career development of those men was possible since Muslim societies favoured individual competencies over one's social background. Still, the quality of those relations is quite questionable since those people have been incorporated in the Ottoman ruling regime and were following its rules. That is why services paid in money are more appropriately defined as bribes in the

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<sup>124</sup> Paul Webley – Stephen E. G. Lea – Renata Z. Portalska, “The unacceptability of money as a gift”, in: *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 1983, vol. 4, no. 3, 223-238.

<sup>125</sup> *Lett di Lev.*, vol. XIII, f. 98r (2 Jan 1443); *Cons. Rog.*, vol. XI, f. 266r (21 Nov 1450).

<sup>126</sup> *Cons. Maius*, vol. VI, f. 135v (29 Sep 1441); *Ibid.*, vol. XII, f. 218r (without date). Gifts in money were also adopted according to the rank of its recipient, *Lett. di Lev.*, vol. X, f. 215v (13 Sep 1430); *Ibid.*, vol. XIV, f. 190v (without date).

<sup>127</sup> *Lett. di Lev.*, vol. XIV, f. 189v (14 Jan 1458).

<sup>128</sup> *Hrvatska enciklopedija*. Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, on-line edition, entry: Angelović, Mahmud-paša: <http://www.enciklopedija.hr/Natuknica.aspx?ID=2739> (accessed Mar 2021). More details about his life and career can be found in Theoharis Stavrides, *The Sultan of Vezirs: The Life and Times of the Ottoman Grand Vezir Mahmud Pasha Angelovic (1453–1474)*, Ottoman Empire and Its Heritage. Leiden: Brill, 2001.

field of diplomacy.<sup>129</sup> It is worth mentioning that on one occasion Mihaloglu Mehmed-bey gave a piece of advice to the Ragusan ambassador to bribe the viziers with 20,000 ducats<sup>130</sup> which proved that specific goal was easier to achieve by relying on such a gift. We have a proof that certain meetings of the Ragusan ambassadors with their influential hosts were held behind closed doors,<sup>131</sup> but we can only guess whether those negotiations were limited to words as a tool of persuasion.

There were several other advantages of giving money as a gift in private. Unquestionably, presents could provoke a different range of emotions in its recipients, but they could be a cause of discontent and jealousy of a “third person”.<sup>132</sup>

### **The multiple layers of gift value**

City authorities had a tendency to express the monetary value of a gifted object, but even more frequently the cost of a present as a whole, which means the total costs of all the presents sent in one diplomatic mission. It seems that this custom was reserved for internal purposes. By reserving the rough monetary value of gifts for themselves, councilors could even try to evoke the impression of their higher material value by the recipient. The regimes of value were differing regarding the place and time. It is clear that the purchase price was not identical to the value that a specific object could have for its receiver. More than the material value, it was important that gifts symbolized

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<sup>129</sup> Those examples of gift manipulation could potentially be at the same time used as a tool for establishing and maintaining diplomatic networks, but that is a material for new paper.

<sup>130</sup> *Lett. di Lev.* vol. XI, f. 35v (no date).

<sup>131</sup> *Lett. di Lev.* vol. X, f. 209r (13 Sept 1430); *Ibid.*, vol. XI, f. 18r (22 Feb 1431).

<sup>132</sup> It is a well-known example from Ragusan history when one of the Bosnian noblemen was displeased with an extra gift-giving of his rival and first neighbour. Provoked discontent and jealousy were some of the reasons why he started the war against Dubrovnik. See: Bariša Krekić, “Dva priloga bosanskoj istoriji prve polovine petnaestog vijeka”, in: *Glasnik društva istoričara Bosne i Hercegovine*, 1986, no. 37, 129-142. More detailed analysis can be found in: Valentina Šošarić (Zovko), “Negative Emotions in Action – two Examples from the 15th Century Ragusan Diplomacy”, in: *Hiperborrea*, 2019, vol. 6, no. 1, 5-15.

repute, respect, and honour to its recipient. Due to that, it is understandable that the City officials of Dubrovnik presented to their hosts luxury items which were highly desirable due to their “aura”, the scarcity of the material they were made of, demanding techniques and processes of production, and huge market interest in comparison with limited offer or production. The significance of a gift was dependent on an individual recipient who was determining its value. In that evaluation process, an object could gain sentimental value. V. Groebner has noticed how gifts “possess seductive power, eloquence, and the capacity to transform social circumstances.”<sup>133</sup> The emotional value of a gift can be closely related to its practical usability. To be able to say more about this link, we need information as to whether the gift was used, or was redundant; in other words what its “future life” was after being received. Unfortunately, these sources do not give us answers to these questions. If we make an assumption that at least some gifted objects were used, touched, held, viewed, worn, admired, enjoyed, and maybe even repaired before being cast off, then they were experienced in intimate contexts. Although we are not able to reconstruct the “cultural biography” of a specific object,<sup>134</sup> the possible intrinsic value of the gift should be recognized here. Gift-giving was a part of a public event, but its usage was usually in the private sphere. In that way, it connected institutional and hierarchical social structures with personal expression. The intensity of emotional attachment varied as a result of personal, emotional, and affective bonds, or self-interest. As well as the material value of a gift, its emotional value was subject to change depending upon the specific cultural environment, time, and the individual recipient. It was desirable to be familiar with a recipient’s taste so that the selected present could provoke the desired feelings of excitement and surprise.<sup>135</sup> If we take as

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<sup>133</sup> V. Groebner, *Liquid Assets*, 1.

<sup>134</sup> According to Igor Kopytoff “cultural biography” is appropriate to specific things, as they move through different hands, context, and uses, thus accumulating a specific biography, Arjun Appadurai, “Introduction: commodities and the politics of value”, in: *The Social Life of Things*, ed. Arjun Appadurai, New York: New School University, 1988, 34.

<sup>135</sup> Russell W. Belk, “The Perfect Gift”, in: *Gift-Giving: A Research Anthology*, eds. Cele Otnes – Richard Francis Beltramini, Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1996, 67.

an example various clothing items received by the Ottomans as a diplomatic present from Dubrovnik such as *cauezo*,<sup>136</sup> *vesta*, *guarnaza*,<sup>137</sup> and *cappe*,<sup>138</sup> despite the unquestionable quality of the fabrics and furs they were made of, it is not known whether they were worn by the recipients or whether they developed an emotional attachment to them. The degree of emotional attachment could be influenced by practical factors, such as the suitability of their size, and the perception of their stylishness.

The symbolic meaning of the gift was higher if it had the ability to provoke memory of a donor and the particular occasion when it was received. As well as the role of provoking certain emotions of the recipient, gifts simultaneously expressed the emotion of the giver towards the recipient. Thus, emotional transactions in the gift-giving process were reciprocal. These factors had the potential to increase the emotional value of a gift.<sup>139</sup> Diplomatic gifts carried a strong message regarding the emotional engagement of the individuals involved and those feelings had a strong impact on the flow and outcomes of diplomatic negotiations. The act of gift-giving exchange establishes in that way the interpersonal relationships between subjects transacting which could have huge, broad, and long-lasting impacts.<sup>140</sup>

## Conclusion

Systematic examination of diplomatic gifts sent from Dubrovnik to the Sublime Porte at key moments in the development of their relationship proves their huge impact on shaping historical events with extensive consequences. Material objects, especially those that carried strong historical

<sup>136</sup> According to G. Boerio *cauezo* is a special type of scarf worn around neck with a decorative purpose, Giuseppe Boerio, *Dizionario del dialetto veneziano*, Venezia: Coi tipi di Andrea Santini e figlio, 1829, 154. See also: *Lexicon Latinitatis medii aevi Iugoslaviae*, vol. 1, ed. Marko Kostrenčić, Zagrabie: Academia scientiarum et artium Slavorum meridionalium, 1973, 241.

<sup>137</sup> *Guarnaza* or *varnaza* is an amply cut, full-length overgrown for men with sleeves worn unbelted by city signori and magistrati, C. C. Frick, *Dressing Renaissance Florence*, 310.

<sup>138</sup> *Cappe* was a cloak cape or mantle, *Ibid.*, 304.

<sup>139</sup> David Cheal, *The Gift Economy*, London – New York: Routledge, 1988, 131.

<sup>140</sup> Christopher A. Gregory, *Gifts and Commodities*, London: Academic Press, 1982, 41.

and cultural identity, played an important role in the formation, strengthening, and shaking present and potential ties between the two courts. This study identifies gifts as actors of central importance for establishing and maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship with the Sublime Porte at the time of complex and shifting political alliances. Through an examination of public gift-giving rituals the potential of material culture to project political power relations and mutual cultural influences become evident.

Correct understanding of a gift requires its positioning in spatial, temporal, socio-political, and cultural contexts. Analysis of gifts from the first official diplomatic contacts with the Sublime Porte until Dubrovnik became a tributary state can be useful for understanding many sociocultural processes beneath the surface. It seems that Dubrovnik's authorities shared the same code of value with Islamic societies in regard to luxury goods and there was no need to make dramatic alterations to the gifts over almost thirty years. On the basis of previous experience and consequent knowledge, gift-giving had eventually become a relatively routine process.

The study has shown that gifts were socially constructed with the power to shape, maintain, control, and transform political relations and social identities. They were important instruments of expressing polysemantic non-verbal messages regarding the hierarchy of power, emotional relations, cultural exchanges, diplomatic networks, local and foreign markets, fashion, crafts, and trade connections. The gift reception, usage, and value were determined by expectations and culturally constructed attitudes of the recipients. In a process of gift exchange, a particular object could become very special because of its rarity or because the receiver has given it special meaning or personal and emotional value. Gifts had the power to express the feelings of a giver for a recipient, they could provoke a range of recipient's emotions and even the emotions of the third person (if they felt deprived in the gift-giving process).

Gifts were an important element shaping Dubrovnik-Ottoman diplomatic relations. The calculations behind the gift choice were very complex.

The presumed importance of the host, the weight of the issue to be negotiated, and the value of the gifts previously sent were taken into consideration. In any case, gifts had to be satisfactory in order to continue the relationship. According to some contemporaries, when gifts became regular and fixed they could no longer be considered as gifts but rather tribute that requires a very different methodology for analyses. In determining the obligations of the City of great importance were previously sent gifts that were always in conversation with the present moment.

## Addenda

Recipient	Gift list <sup>1</sup>	Gift list <sup>2</sup>	
<i>Imperator</i>	<i>Peza una de zetenino a velutato carmesino</i> <i>Peza una de zetenino zelestro a velutato</i> <i>Miliaro uno de dossi fini caualareschi</i> <i>Miliaro uno de armelini fini</i> <i>Bacili duo con doi bochali grandi de pexo in tuto circa marcas 20</i>	<i>Una peza de zetatin a veluta cremesi</i> <i>Peza una de cetatin zelestro a veluta</i> <i>Miliare uno de dossi fini caualareschi</i> <i>Miliare uno de armelini fini</i> <i>Bacili duo con duo bochali grandi de peso in tuto circa marcas 20</i> <i>Taze duo de libra 1½ per zascuna</i>	
<i>Machmet beg(h)</i> <i>signor de questo ladi</i> <i>Sargi bassa</i> <i>Chalul beg(h)</i>	<i>A zascadun d'essi a un bochal de zercha marcas 4 e tre taze de zercha uncias 18 la taza</i>  <i>che serano in tuto bochali 4 e taze 12</i>	<i>Machmet beg(h)</i>	<i>uno bachal de circha marchas VIII</i> <i>una taza de libra 1½ ducatorum d'oro 300</i>
		<i>signor de questo ladi</i> <i>sargi bassa</i> <i>chalul beg(h)</i>	<i>a zascun de questi tre ad uno bochal de circha marche 4 taza una de libre 1½ ducati d'oro 200 per zascuno</i>

<i>Guiragh canzaler grande a doi capazibasse zoe Sagi beg e Omorat beg</i>	<i>A zascun d'essi a una tazza de uncias 18  che sono taze tre</i>	<i>a zascun d'essi una taza de libra 1½ ducati d'oro cinquanta per ognuno</i>
		<i>E tute le taze sopra dette siano indorate</i>
<i>Protogeri Portari</i>	<i>Taze due del XX del pexo da uncias otto fin a 9 l'una e indorate</i>	<i>non si debia far taze ducatorum d'oro cento</i>
<i>Ysach voiuoda</i>	-	<i>quatro peze di panno a valuta de ducatorum 70 quatre tazze indorate</i>

**Table-1** *The first and second versions of the list of gifts for the mission of Petar de Lucari and Đuro de Goče, Cons. Rog., vol. IV, f. 219v, (17 Aug1430);<sup>1</sup> Ibid., f. 224v, (25 Aug 1430)<sup>2</sup>.*

<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Gift</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Imperador de Turchi</i>	<i>duo li piu belli et mazori bocalli duo bacili duo taçe le piu belle e piu grande</i>	<i>zoe bochali sei belli d'arzeno</i>
<i>Machmet beg viser</i>	<i>uno bocaro una delle mazor taçe ducati CCC d'oro</i>	<i>duo bacili belli  taze XIII</i>
<i>Signor de questo ladi Sargi bassa Chalul beg viseri</i>	<i>uno bocaro una taza ducati CC d'oro per zascun</i>	<i>panni 4 de lana</i>
<i>Sagi beg Amorat beg Cuirach cancelar grande</i>	<i>una taza ducati L d'oro per zascuno da loro</i>	<i>ducati due milia d'oro</i>
<i>Protogeri Portari e altri</i>	<i>in tutto fin a ducati C d'oro</i>	
<i>Voyuoda Isach</i>	<i>quatro panni de lanna quatro taze delle menor a circha libra uno a zascuna</i>	
<i>Per vostre spese</i>	<i>ducati 850 per vostre spese e per scriuer lo ambassador de nostro signor, per spesi de li priuilegi</i>	

**Table-2** *List of gifts from the first instructions to ambassadors Petar de Lucari and Đuro de Goče, Lett. di Lev., vol. X, f. 215v, (13 Sept 1430).*

Recipient	Gift
<i>Imperator amatorat</i>	<i>bochali duo bacili duo d'argento confetere quatro releuate d'arzeno guarnaze tre de dossi de vari che sono a dossi 250 per guarnaza</i>
<i>Magmet bech vixer</i>	<i>taze due d'arzeno dorate signate de n°3 cavezo uno di scarlato de grana varnaza una de dossi de vari che sono dossi 250 ducatorum d'oro L<sup>ta</sup></i>
<i>Calul-bech vixer</i>	<i>taze due d'arzeno dorate signate de n°2 cauezo uno di scarlato de grana varnaza una de dossi de vari che sono dossi 250 ducatorum doro cinquanta</i>
<i>Sargi bassa vixer</i>	<i>taze due d'arzeno dorate signate de n°1 cauezo uno di scarlato de grana uarziaza una de dossi che sono dossi 250 ducatorum doro cinquanta</i>
<i>Bassa di Romania</i>	<i>taze IIII° d'arzeno dorate signate de n° 4 e non altro</i>
<i>Capizabassa e altri</i>	<i>ducatorum d'oro CXX</i>

**Table-3** *List of gifts for Petar de Lucari's mission, Lett. di Lev., vol. XI, ff. 50rv, (28 Jul 1431).*

Recipient	Gift
<i>Imperator amatorat</i>	<i>bochali duo de argento confetere tre darzeno buste d'argento indorate con li suoi couerchi taze quatro darzeno</i>
<i>Machomet beg vixero</i>	<i>cavezo uno da panno de grana de braza noue taze tre d'argento ducati cinquanta doro</i>
<i>Calul beg vixero</i>	<i>cauezo uno da panno de grana de braza noue taze tre d'argento ducatorum doro cinquanta</i>
<i>Sarzi bassa vixero</i>	<i>cauezo uno da panno de grana de braza noue taze tre d'argento ducati cinquanta doro</i>

<i>Imperador de questo ladi</i>	<i>taçe tre dargento</i>
<i>Camsa beg, imperador de quello ladi</i>	<i>taze tre de argento</i>
<i>...plusor persone secondo a vuy meglio parera essere di bisogna</i>	<i>ducatorum d'oro cento</i>
<i>Addenda</i>	<i>Se non si trovava di la Camsabeg imperador de quello ladi al zonzer Vostro alla ditta porta vi conmetiamo una de esse dobiati donar ad Allibeg unaltra a Casnatar e la terza a Caraza I quali forno de qua a Ragusa.</i>
<i>Spender uostro</i>	<i>ducatorum quatrocentorum</i>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<i>...de donando Imperatori amorat et sue curie in denariis et rebus usque ad sumam et amontantiam ducatorum septuagentorum, Acta Consilii Maioris, vol. IV, f. 160v, (5.11.1431.); Acta Cons. Rog., vol. V, f. 45v, (4.11.1431.).</i>

**Table-4 List of gifts from the first instructions to ambassadors Matej de Croçe<sup>141</sup> and Marin de Georgio, Lett. di Lev., vol. XI, f. 61v, (2 Dec 1431).**

<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Gift</b>
<i>Imperador</i>	<i>vesta una di brochado doro armelini 300 per la detta vesta veste 2 de zetolin audentado negro et verde dossi de varri per le dette 600 bochal et bazil dal detto tazze 4 al detto</i>
<i>Bassa</i>	<i>vesta 1<sup>a</sup> de scharlato vesta 1 verde taze 2 dargento contadi ducatorum 70</i>

<sup>141</sup> Dubrovnik's government made a mistake here since instead of the ambassador Matej de Croçe it stated Matej de Resti.

<i>Un viser</i>	<i>vesta de scharlato de grana vesta di panno verde taze 2 dargento contadi doro ducatorum 50</i>
<i>Un viser</i>	<i>vesta 1<sup>a</sup> da scharlato da grana vesta una da panno verde taze 2 darzento contadi doro ducatorum 50</i>
<i>Casnataro ambassadori magni teurci</i>	<i>ducatorum auri CL<sup>ia</sup>. Inter ducatorum auri et alias res qui videbitur domino rector et eis minoris consilis., Cons. Maius, vol. VI, f. 50v, (20 Sep 1440).</i>
TOTAL	<i>...de donando prelibato domino Omorat Imperatori et aliis de sua curia usque ad summam ducatorum auri octingentorum in illis donis argentiis et rebus, Cons. Maius, vol. VI, f. 51r, (23 Sep 1440); Cons. Rog., vol. VII, f. 193v (22 Sep 1440).</i>
The additional cost that ambassadors claimed upon their return	<i>ducatorum CCCC, Cons. Maius, vol. VI, f. 153r, (5 Dec 1441).</i>

**Table-5** *List of gifts from the first instructions to ambassadors Jakov de Sorgo and Stjepan de Benessa, Lett. di Lev., vol. XII, f. 218r, (without date).*

Recipient	Gift	Total
<i>Imperata turcho</i>	<i>taze 14 cadauna desse lunza 1 de amontanza de ducatorum 8 la de monta ducatorum cento et dodexe, ducatorum 112</i>	Taze 32 monta ducatorum 286
<i>Bassa di Romana</i>	<i>taze 4, ad 1 per cadauna a ducatorum 8 la de monta ducatorum trentadoy, zoe ducatorum 32</i>	
<i>Padula bech</i>	<i>taze 4 mense, ducatorum 16</i>	
<i>Fiol de Tuodoro misayze</i>	<i>taze 2 di de 2, ducatorum 16</i>	
<i>Esebeh</i>	<i>taze doi ad 1<sup>a</sup> per cadauna, ducatorum 16</i>	
<i>Mostruxobeh</i>	<i>taze doe, ad una per cadauna, ducatorum 16</i>	
<i>Spariti como a vuy meglio parera</i>	<i>ducati quarantadoy a capazi bassa del signor grande et ad altri capazi de bassa, e di viseri como a vuy meglio parera.</i>	

The remaining money	...ducati quarantadoy a spariti como a vuy parera meglio a Capazi bassa del signor grande et ad altri Capazi di bassa di viseri como a vuy meglio parera. ...e de piu li ducati 100 doro che avanzano alla soma de ducatorum 400 doro lasiamo in vostra libertade a prometer a mustro Sebech o ad altri a cum voy paresse abiando obtegnudo et aiuto. ... et per supplar alle dette cose vi demo ducatorum 400 doro contadi con li quali comprareti le dette tazze 32 la doue meglio vi parera. Ed lo auanzo fareti como e detto di sopra.
TOTAL	... pro dono et simoniis ducatorum aurii quinadringentis, Cons. Maius, vol. VI, 135v (29 Sep 1441)

**Table-6 List of gifts from the first instructions to ambassador Petar de Primo, Lett. di Lev., vol. XIII, f. 40v, (2 Aug 1441).**

Recipient	Gift
<i>Imperador</i>	<i>ducatorum C, Lett. di Lev., vol. XIII, f. 98r, (2 Jan 1443).</i>
<i>Dautbech voyode</i>	<i>yperorum centum in argentiis, Cons. Maius, vol. VII, f. 64r, (5 Jan 1443); Cons. Rog., vol. VIII, f. 190v, (4 Jan 1443).</i>

**Table-7 List of gifts from the first instructions to ambassador Nikola de Forte.**

Recipient	Gift
<i>Imperatori et fratribus</i>	...el bocale et lo bacile et le doe cappe de arzeno per Candanno, il fratelo del imperadore, Lett. di Lev., vol. XIV, f. 52r, (15 Dec 1450) ...ducatorum CCXL videlicet medietatem imperatori aliam medietatem, Cons. Rog., vol. XI, f. 266r (21 Nov 1450)

**Table-8 List of gifts from the first instructions to ambassador Vuk de Babalio, Lett. di Lev., vol. XIV, f. 52r, (15 Dec 1450).**

Recipient	Gift	Total
<i>Imperator</i>	<i>taze XX</i>	<i>taze XLV et ducatorum 80</i>
<i>Angelouich</i>	<i>taze 10 zoe 4 in publico et 6 in occulto</i>	
<i>altro viser</i>	<i>taze 4</i>	
<i>cancellier grandi</i>	<i>taze 2</i>	
<i>2 capidbasse del imperador</i>	<i>taze 2</i>	
<i>Exebegh</i>	<i>taze 4</i>	
<i>in liberta vostra ad donande ad che ve parera meglo</i>	<i>taze 3 che restano 10 aspri</i>	
Remaining money	<i>... ducatorum otanta per scrittore et per donar ad minuto ad di</i>	
TOTAL	<i>... in denariis et rebus usque ad sumam et amontantiam ducatorum aura quadrigentos, Cons. Maius, vol. XI, f. 35r (22 Mar 1458).</i>	

**Table-9 List of gifts from the first instructions to ambassadors Paladin de Lucari and Paladin de Gondula, *Let. di Lev.*, vol. XIV, f. 190v (without date).**

Name of the ambassadors	The place from which the ambassador writes	Date of sending	Received in Dubrovnik	Days the letter was on the way	Instructions and replies from Dubrovnik	Days spent waiting for reply	Source
Petar de Lucari Đuro de Goçe	-	-	-	-	13 Sep 1430	-	<i>Let. di Lev.</i> , vol. X, f. 208v
	<i>Lipglian</i> -	4 Oct -	14 Oct <i>questi di passadi</i>	10 -	15 Oct	1 -	<i>Let. di Lev.</i> , vol. XI, f. 7v
	<i>Uschopie</i>	9 Oct	22 Oct	13	27 Oct	5	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 8v
	<i>Ploudiv</i>	22 Oct	20 Nov	29	22 Nov	2	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 10v
	<i>Andrinopoli</i> <i>Andrinopoli</i> <i>Andrinopoli</i>	9 Dec	<i>questi di passadi</i>	-	22 Feb 1431	-	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 17r
	<i>Andrinopoli</i>	-	<i>questi di passadi riceuissimo due vostre lettere terza vostra lettera... abiamo recepto</i>	29	22 Nov	2	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 27r

	<i>Andrinopoli Pristina</i>	26 May 26 Jun	10 Jun 3 Jul	15 7	7 Jul	27 4	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 30r
	<i>Cochagn</i>	6 Jul	10 Jul	4	12 Jul	2	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 30v
	- -	- -	<i>ieri</i>	- -	21 Jul	1 1	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 31r
Petar de Lucari	-	-	-	-	23 Jul	-	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 48r
	<i>Andrinopoli</i>	-	-	-	28 Jul	-	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 49v
	<i>Andrinopoli</i>	4 Sep	3 Oct	29	5 Oct	2	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 54v
	<i>Andrinopoli</i>	18 Sep	6 Oct	18	incomplete instruction	-	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 35v
Matej de Croçe Marin de Georgio	-	-	-	-	2 Dec	2	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 58r
	<i>Andrianopoli</i>	11 Jan	6 Feb	26	17 Apr	71	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 86r
	<i>Andrianopoli</i>	11 Jan	18 Feb	38	1432	53	
	<i>Andrianopoli</i>	23 Jan	18 Feb	26		53	
	<i>Andrianopoli</i>	4 Feb	8 Mar	32		39	
	<i>Andrianopoli</i>	20 Apr 10 May	2 Jun	43 23	2 Jun	0	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 96r
	-	-	-	-	9 Nov	-	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 118r
Jakov de Sorgo Stjepan de Benessa	-	-	-	-	15 Jul 1440	-	<i>Let. di Lev</i> , vol. XII, f. 213r
	<i>Andrianopoli</i>	29 Jan	24 Feb	26	22 Mar	26	<i>Let. di Lev</i> , vol. XIII, f. 16r
	<i>Andrianopoli</i>	19 Feb	12 Mar	21	1441	10	
	<i>Andrianopoli</i>	29 Jan	22 Mar		17 Apr		<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 23r
	-	-	-	-	19 Apr	-	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 23r
Petar de Primo	-	-	-	-	2 Aug	-	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 38v
		13 Aug 13 Aug	19 Aug	6 6	22 Aug	3	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 41r
	-	-	<i>questi di passadi</i>	-	1 Oct	-	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 45r
Petar de Primo Nikola de Goçe	<i>Andrianopoli</i>	11 Nov	30 Nov	19	15 Dec	15	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 55r

Nikola de Forte	-	-	-	-	12 Jan 1443	-	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 98r
	-	-	<i>abiamo riceuuto questo di vostra lettera</i>	-	26 Jan	-	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 102r
Paladin de Lucari Paladin de Gondula	-	-	-	-	without date	-	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 190v
	-	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Let. di Lev.</i> , vol. XVI, f. 90r
	<i>Subotiza</i> <i>Subotiza</i>	8 May 8 May	16 May 16 May	8 8	22 May 22 May	6 6	<i>Let. di Lev.</i> , vol. XIV, f. 194v <i>Ibid.</i> , vol. XVI, f. 100r
	-	-	-	-	9 Jul	-	<i>Let. di Lev.</i> , vol. XVI, f. 99r
	Nis	20 Aug	29 Aug		1 Sep		<i>Let. di Lev.</i> , vol. XIV, f. 196r

**Table-10** *Letters to Ragusan ambassadors sent to the Sublime Porte and their answers (1430-1458).*

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## DUBROVAČKI DIPLOMATSKI POKLONI ODASLANI NA VISOKU PORTU (1430. – 1458.)

### Sažetak

Dosadašnja historiografska istraživanja posvećena analizi djelovanja prvih službeno upućenih dubrovačkih diplomatskih poslanstava na Visoku Portu (1430. – 1458.) propustila su uočiti važnost poklona kao sredstva neverbalne komunikacije kojim su se odašiljale višeznačne poruke glede društveno-političkih odnosa moći, trgovinskih veza grada i stanja njegove riznice, podrijetla darovanih predmeta i tehnika njihove proizvodnje, dominantnih trendova i ukusa vremena te konstrukcije kolektivnog identiteta vladajućih kroz njihovu vrijednost: materijalnu, praktičnu, simboličku i emocionalnu. Kao važna komponenta u izučavanju pobrojanih problema nametnula se ceremonijalna mizanscena koja je pratila izmjenu poklona između različitih kultura koje su prakticirale drugačije diplomatske obrasce.

Analiza je pokazala kako je početna dubrovačka zbuđenost glede izbora poklona zamijenjena relativno rutinskim procesom darivanja u desetljećima do uspostave tributarnog odnosa. Dubrovački pokloni odaslani na Visoku Portu mogu se podijeliti na tri skupine: skupocjene tkanine, krzno i odjeća, predmeti načinjeni od srebra te novac. Njihova interpretacija ovisna je o prostorno-vremenskom, socio-političkom i kulturološkom kontekstu u kojem se pojavljuju. Diplomatski pokloni imali su mogućnost da oblikuju, održavaju, kontroliraju i transformiraju odnose i identitete. Važan su instrument ekspresije polisemantičkih poruka glede hijerarhije moći, emocionalnih odnosa, kulturološke razmjene i transfera znanja. Gradske vlasti nastojale su odabirom poklona promovirati luksuzne proizvode lokalne proizvodnje čime su otvarale vrata mogućoj trgovinskoj razmjeni i jačanju ekonomije grada.

Možemo zaključiti kako je odabir poklona bio izazovan zadatak. Gradske vlasti morale su posvećivati punu pažnju različitim aspektima multidimenzionalnog značenja poklona kako bi postigle željeni efekt. Istraživanje je

pokazalo kako razmjena diplomatskih poklona nije bila prolazan fenomen. Objekti materijalne stvarnosti u sferi diplomacije nosili su snažne reperkusije na realizaciju željenih ciljeva u sadašnjem trenutku, a istovremeno su oblikovali odnose između dva politička središta u budućnosti, utječući tako na razvoj povijesnih procesa.